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VIA S. NICOLA DA TOLENTINO, 8, ROME (30), ITALY

ACIES ORDINATA



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THE BELGIAN PROVINCIAL ON COLLEGE SODALITIES

A Letter of Rev. Father Provincial of Belgium concerning Sodalities in our Colleges, sets forth the fundamental principles so clearly that a brief synopsis of it will prove useful.

Dated September 25, 1925, and addressed to College Rectors, it is substantially as follows :

To restore our College Sodalities to their pristine vigor is something all desire and which corresponds exactly to the reiterated wishes of our Very Rev. Father General, it is necessary above all to root out of the minds of our students and especially of some of Ours the opinion that the Sodality is antiquated or degenerate and played out, and ought therefore give place to more modern organizations.

I would not venture to deny that many individual Sodalities are in that plight. But it is our business to remove the foundation for such opinions by making our Sodalities **correspond to their genuine nature** so as to become assemblies of the better and the best students, who excel in zeal for virtue and in particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and who attract others by word and example.

Now to secure uniformity of action we must have organization. Organization is impossible without law ; and the law in this case consists of the **Rules of the Sodality**. Unfortunately, many hardly know these Rules ; so it is imperative that Directors, at the beginning of the school year especially, should explain them and comment upon them in their exhortations.

In admitting Sodalists, attention should be given to the **common good of the whole body** rather than to the private good of this or that boy. A sine qua non for the renovation of every Sodality is that no one should be admitted except well-selected youths. Better suppress a Sodality and replace it by another organization than admit every one indiscriminately just because they have good will. Neither should necessary punishments be spared even after admission ; suspend and expel, if necessary.

One must not yield to the undisciplined zeal which urges the Director to be easy in extending the benefit of the Sodality to the greatest number of students, and in inviting as many as possible to the pious meetings of the Sodality. For the greater part of our students, the exercises of piety commonly had in our Colleges coupled with the confessor's spiritual direction are amply sufficient. Whereas in the Sodality the activity we strive for will practically come to nought, if the negligent are mixed with the better students. Certainly it is difficult to say just how many should be selected but in general the Sodalists should not exceed a fourth or at most a third of the students.

The Rev. Provincial then speaks of the virtues which the Sodalists ought to practice in the Colleges, and of the manner in which apostolic works are to be undertaken. Very wisely he adds, that for immature youths still in process of formation, works of zeal should be so chosen that it may be clear that what we seek is not so much the promotion of some good work through the students, as the spiritual good of the students themselves and their introduction to the apostolate. Thus it will be easy to avoid excesses.

Finally Directors must not forget that we are speaking of the Sodality as a *Marian* organization.

Devotion to Mary is to be planted in the souls of our youth, so that all their good works may flow spontaneously from it. This devotion along with the Holy Eucharist is the root of true Catholic piety. It is to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus itself that we must lead children and youths through Mary.

The following rules were then added by the Rev. Father Provincial.

Rules for Student Sodalities

1. Rectors and all College officials must use every effort to make both older and younger students conceive a high opinion of the Sodality. The Rector himself, on occasion of the first proclamation in the College hall, shall announce the names of the Prefects and Assistants to the students and point at the same time to the great hopes placed in the Sodality. Only Sodalists may be appointed to posts of honor among the students.

2. Let the Rector often inquire of the Director about the state of the Sodalists and about everything which concerns the Sodality. If there be many Directors, let him at least every three months call a meeting of them for deliberation about the Sodality.

3. Other organizations such as the Apostleship of Prayer or the Eucharistic Crusade, must not assume the form of a general association in the College, which imitates the end, methods and spirit of the Sodality. Rather let the Rector in each school or the Promotor of these organizations, designate some one of Ours, often (especially) the teacher himself, so that each teacher may promote these societies among his own pupils.

4. New works of zeal which may happen to arise in the College and (as much as circumstances may permit) those also which are already in existence, should be instituted like Sections of the Sodality, and should be made dependent upon the Sodality. At least *this* must be observed without fail: *no student may be a promotor of any work, unless he is at the same time a Sodalist.*

5. Whoever desires to enter the Sodality, must first undergo a serious probation lasting at least two months, nothwithstanding former membership in another Sodality either in the College or outside of it. Let no one be exempted from this new probation except Major Officers.

6. To promote the formation of the Sodalists and close union between them, Directors must be supplied with periodical leaflets for the students, prepared on the lines of others already published, such as the French "*Gate of Heaven*" and the Flemish "*Bijblad voor Studenten*".

7. Let a Manual for Students' Sodalities be prepared, with the help of which greater unity and coordination in method, and as it may be hoped, more abundant fruits and efficacy may be obtained.

We apologize to Spain. Last month the "*Acies Ordinata*" stated that the number of aggregations of Spanish Sodalities to the Prima Primaria was less than that of last year. The reverse is the truth. *Last year there were* 53 *aggregations in Spain as against 19 in 1924.* We are sorry indeed to have cast the slightest shadow on the fair fame of the country of Father Ignatius Fiter, the great champion of the modern Sodality.

SODALITY UNIONS

The observations made in "*Acies Ordinata*" some months ago on the subject of Sodality Unions, are really worthy of consideration. Opinions differ on the subject, but certainly what "*Acies Ordinata*" stood for seems easy enough and certainly adapted to the end in view. Just as no one becomes great of a sudden, so neither nature, nor art, nor genius are accustomed to bring forth a perfect being the first time. This is all the more true when there is a question of such importance as a World Sodality Union.

To begin by National unions is certainly the most prudent thing to do. Although there are flourishing Sodalities in all nations, yet for various causes, many of them are practically dead, and there can be no society of the dead.

But can these dead rise again? Yes! Emphatically yes! They can live and flourish and be most useful in any part of the world and in any age however corrupt. The power of life and death lies in the hands of the Directors. Adapting to the latter the words of our Holy Father Ignatius, we can safely say that the Sodalities will be pretty much what their Directors are.

But here we come upon a difference of opinion. Some hold that the Sodality is too old-fashioned to satisfy the temper of the age. Others claim that the Sodality from its very nature and constitution is eminently fitted not only to restore everything in Christ, but even to give a wise direction and proper support to the energies and aspirations of our times. These protagonists of the Sodality are men of the highest authority. They occupy the highest posts in the Church and the Society; they are thoroughly acquaimted with modern needs and they have wisely managed the most momentous business. I refer to our more recent Fathers General, and men of the same rank.

Which of these two classes are we to believe? Unless I am much mistaken, the latter. And I do not side with them solely on the strength of their authority, since the subject is one open to argument, but relying also on the reasons they allege and on the success which they have achieved.

As everyone knows, the Apostolic letters of the Popes, the instructions of the Generals, the rules and the historical sources, all show that the Sodalities of Our Lady professed an apostolic spirit from the very beginning. And what characterizes the present age more than its feverish eagerness to start movements or institutions for the betterment of individuals, classes, groups, etc.? This being the case, let us leave aside the mass of other organizations whose weak nature and excessive numbers have given us such meagre results, and let us revive the Sodalities, which are assured, owing to our vocation, of an efficaciousness which will be permanent and heaven-sent; for the Sodalities are the Society's own and impregnated with its apostolic spirit.

If I mention a few instances of notable achievements on the part of the Sodality, I by no means wish to exclude many other parts of the world where the Society labors, which could afford examples equally striking, such as the Sodalities of Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao and Valencia, and those of Vienna and Lemberg.

Here In Italy the well-known College of Padua which accommodates the students at the public University, and which has taken such a prominent part in the "Catholic Action" movement, owes its origin to the Sodality of our Lady, and maintains three such Sodalities today for University students. What was the reason why the Directors of the Association for Catholic Youth strove by personal interviews and public meetings and even by representations made to the Popes, to bring our Sodalities into their Circles? They themselves gave the answer: *Those Sodalities were alone capable of giving the fullness of strength and spirit necessary for the success of the Association.* How well the Sodalities answer to the spirit of the times, clearly appeared in the past Holy Year, when Sodalists came in crowds from America, Spain, France, Germany, Hungary and elsewhere, edifying all who saw them with their piety and leaving a tangible and perpetual proof of their piety in the Museum erected by their contributions to preserve the precious relics of the Catacombs.

No, our Sodalities have not grown old, but what they need are prudent and energetic Directors. If some Sodalities have them, why cannot others have them too?

The revival of individual Sodalities is the first and most necessary step toward a World Union. But the good will of all Directors must be supported. Their efforts will be vain unless favored by Superiors. Very Rev. Father Wernz saw this clearly when he penned the following solemn admonition in his letter on fostering the Sodalities of Our Lady:

"*One thing remains, and that the most important of all, namely execution. But this will come too, if the Sodalities of Our Lady are made much of by all, as they should be. For as Reverend Father Retz said, the Sodalities of Our Lady may properly be considered as one of the chief among the very important means thought out by Our Society to increase divine worship and to secure the salvation of souls*„ (Select Letters p. 199).

Let this esteem be followed by execution; and so your Reverence, especially in your yearly visitations of our houses, will foster this love of the Sodalities by fitting exhortations and you will be especially solicitous about their condition. Local superiors too, imbued with the same spirit, will be mindful of the Sodalities when they make the consideration prescribed for them on the fifth day, number 2, and they will ask about them and urgent them in domestic consultations." (1).

Truly the judgments of men are wonderful. Of old the Society in order to direct and order all sound religious activity, deemed it advisable to unite the faithful according to classes, and thus it was that the Sodalities of Our Lady and the Confraternities of "Bona Mors" came into existence. They made use of them as of a sort of army in order to begin and carry on many good works, so that to them is due a great part of the merit and praise for the restoration of good discipline in the Church.

Later, it was from these Sodalities and Congregations that there came forth many of the foremost founders and leaders of the recent "Catholic Action" movement, who drew from the Sodality such energy and ingenuity for the Church, that when the Society was driven out of cities and kingdoms in the last century, the new institutions were able to supply for it and continue its good works. What reason is there then to think that our Sodalities are unfitted to the times? Shall we on returning from exile and finding that our tender slips have grown to mighty trees, conclude that the root is now useless? Let others say so; but let us plant and water the root which has brought forth such rich fruit.

C., S. J. (Italy).

(1) Acta Romana, 1914, q. 41.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

Sodalists and the Liturgy. Much is being done nowadays to foster the liturgical sense. Some even wish to leave almost nothing to private pious practices; they would have the liturgy absorb everything. What should be observed by our Sodalities in this matter?

Answer. Exaggerations aside, the liturgical sense, or the understanding and love of the public worship which the Church offers to God, should by all means be cultivated among our Sodalists. A deep and accurate knowledge of Catholic liturgy will help much to acquire that holiness which the Sodality professes to be its primary end.

Hence the Director will act wisely:

a) If, in talking to his Sodalists, he stimulates them to take *part in liturgical exercises*, and to read about and study them.

b) Also if he explains well the *meaning of the sacred functions*, especially during the Lenten and Paschal seasons.

c) If he explains the liturgy of *the Mass*, the sacred vestments, the altar, the use and the symbolism of the sacred utensils, etc.

d) If he exhorts the Sodalists to follow the Mass with a small *missal* if possible, so that they may become used to praying with the Church.

e) If he exhorts the Sodalists to *follow the ecclesiastical year*, and if he himself does the same in his talks, in the prayers, in the devotions, the meetings, the songs, etc.

f) If he commends the reciting of the *Little Office* by those who can profit by it, and if he explains it part by part at the meetings.

g) If he stimulates the Sodalists to treat *liturgical themes* in their Academies.

* * *

The Diocesan Sodality Director. In some countries, where the Sodalities are in a flourishing condition in most parishes of the diocese, the Bishop usually names a Diocesan Sodality Director. 1) Should Ours favor this practice? 2) And what jurisdiction have such Directors over the individual Sodalities?

Answer to 1). Yes, this practice should certainly be favored. Not only that, but where it does not exist we

should *try to have it introduced*, providing however that, as far as may be, those chosen for the position should be strenuous promoters of the Sodality and thoroughly acquainted with its rules and its spirit. Such a Diocesan Director can effectually stimulate the sluggish, encourage the fervent, suggest helps, and do everything as the Bishop's representative which will maintain and increase the vigor of the Sodality. The Sodalists too will feel themselves impelled to a high esteem of Sodality Activities when they find a special dioecesan official visiting, praising and advising them in the Bishop's name.

Answer to 2). The Diocesan Director's jurisdiction will be exactly what the Bishop gives him. It is clear that his jurisdiction will not of itself extend to our Sodalities since they are exempt; but for unity's sake, Ours also will prudently follow his wishes in affairs common to all Sodalities, unless he should urge something foreign to our Institute.

The Bishop, in Sodalities subject to himself, can, if he wish s, empower the Diocesan Director to exercise at discretion some of the duties of individual Directors in the various Sodalities. But generally the Bishop will not do that. Rather he will leave individual Directors their usual autonomy and will make the Diocesan Director an *inspector* and *adviser*, who must however work so as not to impair the authority of individual Directors with their Sodalists. He will do well to exact a written account every year from all Directors, visit all Sodalities, and commend or even prescribe certain common counsels and apostolic activities for all.

Counsels for School-Mistresses' Sodality

Munich, Bavaria

The ease with which the Sodality of Our Lady adapts itself to various callings is well illustrated by the Bavarian Sodality for School-mistresses, which has its headquarters at Munich, but has its members dispersed throughout the province.

To remedy the lack of the usual exhortations, they are supplied with a little weekly, "*Virgo Mater*". We take from it certain "rules of life" which it recently published for its readers.

1. Your Room. It should be simple but beautiful and pleasant, so as to invite you to stay at home and remain a long time in the country.

2. Food. Let it be substantial and healthy, it is better to labor well than to fast much. Money is not to be spared here; rather one should cut down on expensive and harmful foods and drinks, ond on fine dress.

3. Sleep. Give eight hours to it. Go to bed early, so as to rise early, which is good for health and ho liness.

4. Moderation. An almost magic remedy for keeping one's strength is moderation. You lose if you shout or hurry too much; likevise, if you are too anxious about your body. When ill, call the physician. "*Honor the physician for the need thou hast of him; for the Most High hath created him*" (Wis. 38, 1).

5. Walking. Don't give up this exercise for indoor games or idle conversation; walking in the open refreshes mind and body.

6. Hobbies. Have a hobby to occupy yourself with in your free time, but let it be a worthy one: painting, needlework (for the church, the missions, or the poor), music, poetry, writing, vegetable or flower gradening, etc.

7. Holidays. These afford opportunity for little pilgrimages or instructive excursions.

8. Periodicals. Remember that they are the battle ground of heaven and hell today. (A. Stolz). Don't tolerate periodicals in your home which do not respect the Faith and the Church. "*He that is not with Me is against Me.*" (Matt. 12, 30).

9. Letters. Parents and relatives should be written to; but a heavy correspondence cannot be recommended.

10. Savings. Remember the rainy day to come and put whatever money is left over in a savings bank.

11. Books. Booksellers say that by far the greatest number of books are bought by school-mistresses. That is certainly very much to their credit, provided a good choice be made. Don't let your library without the Holy Scripures, the Imitation, the Lives of the Saints, St. Francis de Sales' Introduction to a Devout Life, a prayer book and a thorough Explanation of Christian Doctrine.

12. Daily order for spiritual exercises. Settle on one. Keep order and it will keep you.

13. Self-denial. Seek mortifications which will not injure your health. Abstain from wine and from much talking. "*Silence is golden.*" Don't speak or contradict unless when necessary.

14. The Evangelical Counsels. For greater progress, a vow of chastity may help you, but it should be made only for a year and after consulting your confessor. Give a good example by dressing modestly.

15. Charity. Nothing is more becoming the Catholic school-mistress. Visit the sick. Teach ignorant adults and poor children, even outside school hours, and especially in religion. Help the parish priest to organize good works. Keep an eye on young girls who have finished school. "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give the crown of life.*" (Apoc. 2, 10).

A Formula of Petition to the Bishop for the Erection of a Sodality.

Desirous of promoting devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, I respectfully request Your Lordship:

1. To erect a Sodality of Our Lady (e. g., for men, workingmen, girls, etc.), under the title of (some title of Our Lady, e. g. The Annunciation) and of Saint (Aloysius Gonzaga, Theresa) in (the College of..., or the parish church of St. Peter, etc.), in (city), in the diocese of Your Lordship.

2. To approve the rules of the above-mentioned Sodality hereto attached (or: which are the same as those of the Prima Primaria Sodality of the Roman College; or: as they are exhibited in naming some Manual).

3. To name for Director (e. g. the parish priest, first assistant priest, rector, etc., of this church, college etc., and his successors in that office).

4. To give permission that this Sodality may be aggregated to the Prima Primaria Sodality of the Roman College, so that the indulgences granted the latter may be gained.

(Day, month, year, place).

(Signature of petitioner).

Letters to the Editor

"Ristretti" in the Sodality.

Reverend Father in Christ,

Pardon my boldness in adding something to the answer which your Reverence gave a certain Father about the "*Ristretti*" (or "*Restricted Circles*") in the Sodality (January, 1926, p. 4).

Inumerable documents attest, that from the times of Fathers Claudius Acquaviva and Mutius Vitelleschi, there existed in Rome many "*Ristretti*" of the Sodalities of Our Lady, known to all, both to Sodalists and to others; and they flourished up to the year 1870, when our Society was expelled from its churches and houses; and, what is more, one of those "*Ristretti*" still exists and functions under the direction of Father Joseph Corsi, with the full approbation of Superiors. And there was nothing clandestine or illegitimate about these "*Ristretti*".

The first to institute them was Father Sartorius Caputo of the Province of Naples, who when assigned to our College of Aquila in the Abruzzi, was director of a very large and select Sodatity of noblemen.

Seeing many of these Sodalists much ahead of the rest in piety and fervor, he determined to separate them and form them into a new body in which they might aim at a more perfect life for their own sanctification and the salvation of others. This happened in the year 1604.

The success was great; but some of Ours were offended because it seemed to them that the "*Ristretto*" was a new body and foreign to our Institute

The controversy, however, was decided by Father General Claudius Acquaviva in favor of Father Caputo, Moreover, permission was given by the General for a similar "*Ristretto*" in Rome; and in fact one of them was instituted somewhat later under Father Mutius Vitelleschi in 1618 by Father Peter Gravita, director of the Oratory of General Communion; he admitted many priests who used to attend that Oratory, and who seemed fitted for a more perfect and apostolic life. Thus he formed the "*Ristretto*" of the Immaculate Conception.

Father Mutius Vitelleschi approved this Sodality so highly that he determined to reserve the supreme directorship of it to himself and his successors; he never forbade it to be known publicly by the name of "*Ristretto*".

It was located at first in the Oratory of Caravita; then it was transferred to the Church of the Gesù (on account of difficulties which it experienced from the older Sodality of the Oratory of Caravita) and still later it was brought back to the Director of that some Oratory. It ceased to exist only a few years ago, not at the wish of Our Father General, but for a totally different reason: local authorities directed the priests to enter another body.

But this was not the only "*Ristretto*" formed in Rome; as time progressed, others were instituted especially in the Oratory of the Caravita and in the Roman College.

In the Oratory, there were at least five, the first was for priests, as I said, and was afterwards called St. Peter's; the second for noblemen under the title of the Apostles; each was made up of twelve ordinary members, both nobles and plebeians; they helped the Fathers daily in their sacred ministries, and were commonly known from the dress they wore as the *Collaroni*. Finally there was a fifth "*Ristretto*" for young men under the patronage of the Immaculate Mother of God and of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Some of the more prominent Directors of these Sodalities were Father Gravita, Father Merlini and Father Francis Mario Galluzzi. They attracted many excellent priests and helped them on to sanctity. One of these Sodalists was St. John Baptist de Rossi.

But what about the Roman College? The students, although distributed in various Sodalities, also had their "Ristretti", which were instituted and fostered by the hard work especially of Father John Anthony Caprini, Father Pompey De Benedictis, Father Jerome de Sanctis and Father Francis Maria Galluzzi. Such was the history before the Suppression of the Society up to the year 1773.

After the Restoration in 1814, with the reappearance of the Sodalities, the "*Ristretti*" were formed once more in the Oratory of the Caravita and in the Roman College. And in the latter up to the year 1870, a particularly flourishing "*Ristretto*" for students was the one commonly known as "The Apostles R. C."; it was very prosperous during the Directorship of Fathers Joseph Bonvicini, John Cassini and Michael Tavani. In the Oratory of the Caravita, too, the same Father Tavani renewed the priests' "*Ristretto*" to the great profit of the City and of other Italian cities, as the "*Ristretto*" turned out a large number of excellent and holy priests.

Nor were the "*Ristretti*" confined to Rome alone. In the whole Roman Province, (and the same can be said of the other Italian Provinces), almost every College had its "*Ristretto*", which was known as the "*Secret Sodality*" to distinguish it from the Sodalities proper. The latter were called *common and public*, because entrance to them was easily obtained, and the former were called *secret* as being reserved to few and very select Sodalists.

A similar distinction was also made in the *Bona Mors Societies*. At Rome, for instance, in the Professed House, there was the public *Bona Mors Society*, common to all men and women, and which had its meeting every Friday in the Church; and there was the secret body, for men only (and very few of them), which gathered every Thursday in the chapel near the high altar, for vocal prayers, meditation and the discipline.

But to return to the Sodalities of Our Lady and make an end of this long letter, I may simply add that in 1873, the year of the Suppression of the Society, the common and public Sodalities of Our Lady numbered 132 and the "*Ristretti*" 26, the latter number corresponding almost exactly with the number of Col-

leges in the province, as may be proved by reference to the province catalogue of 1772–73.

I recommend myself to your Holy Sacrifices and prayers. PETER GALLETTI, S. J.

Note: Fuller information may be found in:

Vita del P. Francesco Maria Galluzzi, Book II, p. 113, by Father Giovanni.

Editor's Note. Nevertheless, Very Rev. Father Wernz in a communication to the Province of Turin, February 18, 1908, wisely said:

" The institution among the best Sodalists, of a special Sodality, usually known as a "*Ristretto*" cannot be thought of before the Sodality itself has proved for some time that it is solidly established. And even after a Sodality has become settled its circumstances are not always such as to permit or even advise the formation of a "*Ristretto*", since there can be danger that the remaining part of the Sodality may be neglected little by little.

(Cf. Mullan, *The Sodality of Our Lady Studied in the Documents*, n. 1968).

List of Blessed and Venerable Sodalists

Father Constantine Kempf who is an expert in modern hagiography has sent the following additions to the list of Father Lamprecht.

" In my opinion, it would be better to list only those Sodalists whose process for beatification has been already begun; because otherwise, if we wish to name all those who died in the odor of sanctity, the number will be almost infinite and we will be unable to judge of their merits. Hence I would omit from Father Mulder's list; *Casp. de Castro*, *Malagrida*, *Haywood*, *Pavone*, *Drexel*, and *Eleanor de Gonzaga*.

There are some corrections also to be made. *Father Bruno de Santa Cruz*, is the same as Father Bruno Bruni who figures in Father Lamprecht's roll; Bruni was his real name, and he seems to have assumed " de Santa Cruz " merely out of devotion. *Father John K. Kratz*, was a Sodalist in Düsseldorf not Goldheim; Golzheim was his native place. *Blessed Bellarmine* can hardly be numbered among the Sodalists, as he entered the Society in 1559 and we have not the slightest indication that he ever was a Director.

The following should be added to the list: 1) *Ven. Caspar Bertoni* († June 12, 1853), a secular priest, founder of an Oratory in Verona; he was Director of a Sodality which was aggregated to the Prima Primaria. 2) *Ven. Vincentia Gerosa* († June 29, 1847), a teacher with Ven. Bartolomea Capitanio of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in Lovere. *Ven. Francis a Lago Negro*, O. M. Cap., († 1814) was very probably a Sodalist, as he was a student of our College of Naples and extremely devoted to Our Lady of the Annunciation.

Father August Lamprecht also proposes the following corrections: *Blessed Peter Berno* (not Berni); *Father Francis del Castillo* (not de); *Father Francis M. Galluzzi* (not Galuzzi); *Father Peter Cayron*, † *1754* (not 1745); *Louise Theresa de Montaignac*, † *1885* (not Vincentia, † 1847); *Carolina Carre de Malberg*, † *1891* (not 1885). *Father William Barrow*, named by Father Mulders is the same as William Harcourt (Warren) † 1679 in Father Lamprecht's list. (See Father Kempf's *Heiligkeit der Ges. Jesu, I, 355). Blesseds Stephen Pongracz and Melchior Grodecz, the Archduchess Eleanor* († 1620), and her sister *Christiana* († 1621) (both in Hall), ... must all be put in the list as *certainly* Sodalists.

Father Felix Baranera (Puerto Montt, Chile) advises us that *Venerable Anthony Claret*, Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba, († 1870) was a sodalist. (*Life* by Mariano Aguilar, III, 53).

Inquiries must be made about *Contard Ferrini* († 1802), *Joseph Tovini* (a lawyer in Brescia, † 1897), *Cardinal Charles Odescalchi* († 1841 in Modena); Blessed Anna M. Taigi († 1837, Roma); Pauline M Jaricot († 1862, Lyons); Gemma Galgani († 1903, Lucca). Any information about them should be sent to *Father Aug. Lamprecht, Paulskirche, Sporgasse 21 a, Graz. Austria.*

Catholic Instruction League and the Sodality

" I found a new thing started in the Middle West. I think they call it the Catholic Instruction League, founded by one of Ours. What are the Sodalities for anyhow? I know we need Sunday school teachers, but why can't the Sodalists do it?"

The Editor's Reply:

So you found the *Catholic Instruction League* established. More power to it! May its tribe increase! Did you know that the League received Papal approbation and that it has a Primaria with indulgences, power of aggregation, etc.? We are glad of these Papal favors; they form a worthy crown for a most deserving organization.

I quite agree with you, my dear Father, that the Sodalists *ought to* teach Catechism. The first of the Common Rules mentions that activity explicitly.

But in many of the places where the C. I. L. was established **there was no Sodality**. Quite a number of priests know nothing about the Sodality. Moreover, the possibility of having a Sodality *without a resident Dir ctor*, has not dawned on numbers of priests. And so where the Sodality did not exist, what more natural than to form a special organization for the purpose of teaching, wherever the need of that teaching might be found?

Again, even where there are Sodalities, the members are **not numerous enough** to do all the catechetical work which is in demand. Indeed, even where the *C. I. L.* is very flourishing as, for example, in Milwaukee Fr. R. B. Morrison in *The Queen's Work* for November, 1925 estimates that there are about 9,000 Catholic children who receive no systematic religious instruction as against 3,500 of such neglected children who were lately gathered into the centers of the *C. I. L.*

But there's another answer, and a sadder one. Sodalists who **could** catechize, **won't**. *" Come over to my parish and teach catechism"* was the message sent to a famous Sodality. It's Director urged acceptance Nobody stirred. Not liking this lack of Sodality spirit, the Director (he was new) lectured the Sodality on its duty. No result coming from his instructions, be began

to dismiss some of the members; whereupon, the cry was raised that he was destroying the famous old Sodality (" *apple of our eye*", etc.), and next year the Director was removed.

Now just suppose, my dear Father, that the **Director himself did not believe** in such exterior activities and would not deliver the parish priest's message. Wouldn't you yourself be tempted to form a center of the *C. I. L.* and let the Sodality go?

And just one word more. **There's no opposition between the Sodality and the C. I. L.**. Sodalists may enter Centers of the League if they wish, or form a Center of their own. The work done there counts as if done in a Catechetical Section completely dependent on the Sodality.

Nevertheless it remains true that, when well directed according to its spirit *the Sodality is the best school for the apostolate*, since it gives a wide and solid *training* in its chief branches, and besides causing them to be *exercised* by the Sodalists, encourages tem tho take the *initiative* in such works, and moreover implants and keeps alive the true, spiritual, and *enduring zeal* without which there can be no solid or lasting apostolate.

Note well, however, the conditions: " **when well directed, according to its spirit.**,,

CHRONICLE

Rome, Jesuit Missionary Congress. " *Acta Congressus Missionum S. J.* " is the official account of Our Missionary Congress held in Rome last October. On page 50, among the means for fomenting vocations to the Missions, a special place is given to the *Sodality of Our Lady*. . One of the Fathers urged that Mission Sections be established in all Sodalities of Our Lady. " For if the young Sodalists are formed not only to personal piety but also to the Apostolate, the Sodality becomes the seed-ground for vocations. This is especially the case when the Apostolate is exercised through a Mission Section. In the Province of Hungary ten years ago, hardly anyone thought of Missions; but since Mission Sections were started in the Sodality, apostolic zeal is kindled and vocations have increased. "

Very Rev. Father General himself said after the discussion; " The Sodalities of Our Lady, if they are well directed, and if the apostolic spirit is well taught, will be apostolic schools of the first order. " (p. 5.).

Directors will do well to give a serious examination to this account of the " *Acts of the Missionary Congress* ", because they will find in it three things which will greatly facilitate talks to the Mission Sections of their Sodalities:

1. A formal paper on an important topic.
2. A well printed, well divided synopsis of the paper.
3. A discussion.

Indeed, these " Acta ", afford many complete plans for a *series of talks* on the Missions; and they may be drawn on to help Organizations like the " Catholic Student's Mission Crusade " to prepare their mission conferences.

Oña, Burgos, Spain. The youngest boy Sodalists in this parish, known as the " *Estanislaos* ", give a good example of exercise of the apostolate. They have formed a small popular library and opened it to other boys of the town, thus affording a good way of passing the long winter evenings. They also take some of these books to their homes and read them aloud there to the great satisfaction and edification of their parents. Then too they spread mission literature in a small way, and even give little lectures on the subject. (*Estrella del Mar*).

The Queen's Work, St. Louis, Missouri. This well-known magazine which was once entirely devoted to the Sodality, but later became a general magazine of Catholic activities, has again returned to its pristine purpose. The change is a happy one, for if the Sodality is rightly understood, abundant matter will be found for a monthly publication, and it will not be thought necessary to leave the Sodality field in search of articles.

Sodality Congresses held in various places last year repeatedly recommended Directors of Sodality periodicals, not to content themselves with merely putting the word " *Sodality* " on their title pages, but to make the periodicals true organs of the Sodality, since very many questions about the practice of the Sodalities continually come up which ought to be thoroughly discussed and resolved in a uniform way. Principles need to be explained and applied to various cases and conditions; correct ideas and good methods as regards devotion to Mary, the spiritual life, zeal for souls and apostolic works must be set forth again and again; Sodality happenings must be given publicity, etc.

This last point, the "**Chronicle**" of the Sodalities, seems to us a matter of prime importance. Because accounts of the activities of individual Sodalities not only help to edification and invite to imitation, but they silently impel both readers and writers to examine their consciences. If, as sometimes happens, the Director of a Sodality in his annual account has hardly anything else to announce than the election of the new officers, or the admission of new Sodalists, or an excursion to the mountains, or the death of a Sodalist or two; it is generally a good sign that his Sodality has long since fallen by the wayside, and if not completely dead, is in a comatose condition. Where there is life, there is movement generally; and where there is movement, there is something to record.

The above remarks must not be taken, however, as applicable to Sodality affairs in America only, but as of *general* application, being brought to mind by the present welcome event in the life of " *The Queen's Work* ".

We may add that the three first issues of " *The*

Queen's Work" in their new form are full of interest and originality. The *Apologetic*, *Mission* and *Dramatic Sections* of any Sodality will find their specialties treated in a very stimulating manner. All the devices of printing, synopses, etc., are very happily used and well supported by an abundance of clear photographic cuts. We feel sure that "*The Queen's Work*" will be welcome everywhere, even outside of the English-speaking world.

Turnhout, Belgium. A splendid Sodality of men and fathers of families has just entered on its 78th year with 705 Sodalists. Last year it admitted 83 new members, lost 27, with a total gain therefore of 56. The printed annual schedule of the Sodality which bears this information notes that the number of absences from meetings was less than ever before and that the apostolate of the faithful members was especially exercised in *drumming up attendance* by invitations, friendly admonitions, and such other ways as they judged would be efficacious.

The apostolate of others consisted in promoting the *diffusion of good books and papers.* To fit the Sodalists to make effective propaganda for the missions, a study circle met twice a week during the past year for the consideration of mission questions, and the Sodality in order to strengthen its zeal for the Missions undertook to pay for the maintenance of a native seminarist.

Calcutta. "We cull the following details from the letter of an experienced missionary: We have in the Chota-Nagpore Mission 19 sodalities for men or boys with 1,554 sodalists – 12 sodalities for women and girls with 1,163 members. They send delegates to Ranchi every three years for a kind of Congress, where all questions concerning sodalities are discussed. The chief works undertaken by the sodalists are: visiting the sick – calling the priest in case of necessity – instructing the ignorant Christians – preparing Catechumens for baptism – fighting drunkenness, etc. Strange to say women and girls are more zealous than men and boys. *Sodalities have proved a great help to the missionaries.* They have established all over Chota-Nagpore the May Devotions. No village with twenty or more Christians which has not its public prayers and hymns every day of May" (*Morning Star* and *Bombay Examiner).*

Sodalists Persecuted. "A revolt among Catholics of a certain mission (due to differences about social position) caused the boycotting of two of our churches. The first move made by the leaders of the revolt was to prohibit the attendance of a certain class at Sodality meetings. All obeyed except the old boys of our College. 6 Sodalities thus ceased to function. But the Old Boys' Sodality continued to meet. They were our consolation during this very severe trial. Some Sodalists were admirable. One of them was besmeared with tar twice when coming out of church. Others were besmeared with nightsoil or pelted with stones or insulted in anonymous leaflets. In fact the rage of the leaders of the revolt was chiefly against these Sodalists, who with their families prevented the complete desertion of one class of people from the church, and ultimately, with the help of a good native priest, relative of some of the leaders, brought about a sort of peace for the present."

Mt. St. Michael's, Hillyard, Wash., U. S. A. "Between 50 and 60 per cent of the philosophers here are members of the **Sodality Academy**. We are to be called on to judge the essays written by the Sodalists of a near-by parish". *Mr. Carlos D. Simons* has sent the Central Secretariate a large number of carefully typed and mimeographed skeletons which helped in the preparation of the Academy papers read throughout the year. Some subjects were: "*The Director's defects*", "*Mental Prayer*", "*Hospital and Prison*", "*The Press*", "*The Mission Section*", "*Parish Welfare*". The character of these synopses points to a continuance of vigorous study of Sodality problems.

OVER THE TELEPHONE

I need a small *library* for my Boys' Sodality.

What is a good *Meditation Book* to read aloud during Mass or at the meetings?

Which are the best *books for boys' retreats* and for spiritual reading during them?

All experts on these matters are invited to help the Editor to help his correspondent.

So you still **fail to receive the 'Acies Ordinata'?** Well, henceforward every package of *six or more* will be bound securely with twine. Perhaps the packets sent to your College have fallen apart in the mail. We heard once, it is true, that a large package of 'A. O. lay *unopened for some months* on the addressee's table. Let us hope that was an exaggeration.

"Your valuable publication affords me ample matter for the Sodalities I have here."

"2 English-speaking priests of the Society tend to about 5,500 people in Calcutta."

"The Ladies' Sodality and the Men's Sodality are made up of elderly persons. The young will not enter."

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Editor: *Lawrence E. O'Keeffe, S. J.*
Superiorum permissu.

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